

The Devil Fire is in the Details

Strategically Placed Fuels Project Helps Herd Wildfire

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Last Sunday, August 10, 2008, a lightning holdover in a juniper tree reared its ugly head with the help of wind, topography and very dry vegetation to ignite the Devil Fire in northwestern Utah. The Devil Fire is one of many wildfires that has put hazardous fuels reduction projects to the ultimate test; even under intense conditions. Fuels projects continue to prove the victors in the fight against raging wildfires, the spoils of their success can be measured in savings and safety.

The Devil Fire is an example of how fire behavior can be modified with effective fuels management projects aimed to lessen the rise of catastrophic wildfire which increasingly effect lives, property and wildlife habitat in Utah.

“The existence of the Chokecherry fuels project reduced the fire’s intensity and movement; firefighters were given the opportunity to attack the fire directly with engines and air tankers when it hit the fuels project,” said Fire Management Officer Jeff Kline of the Salt Lake Field Office. “You couldn’t have staged a better comparison of fuels burning side by side between treated and untreated fuels.

Details Addressed During Project Planning

- **Past Seeding Efforts Help Keep a Check on Future Wildfires.** Nearly three years ago, another fire had burned through an area adjacent to the Devil Fire. As part of the Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation plan for the area, aggressive perennial species were planted. The effort paid off big time when the Devil Fire hit, the burn avoided the area completely
- **An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.** With firefighting costs escalating into the millions to suppress just one fire, projects like Chokecherry support strategically placed fuels projects that can lead to cost savings measured in decreased fire suppression time, equipment and resources spent on a wildfire.
- **Project Prioritization.** How much, who benefits, locations and timing takes place at a bi-annual interagency meeting including the State of Utah Forestry, Fire and State Lands, the U.S. Forest Service, private landowners, organizations and stakeholders. Project managers share valuable information, location and experience throughout the region by bringing ideas to the table.
- **Strategic Placement.** The Chokecherry project is one of many fuels project to be tested by a wildfire. These projects were worth their weight in fire suppression savings to the taxpayer. These projects are responsible for saving time in suppression, equipment and mopping-up efforts. Most importantly, the risk to firefighters and property has been substantially mitigated.

For more information on Utah Fuels Projects making a difference visit www.utahfireinfo.gov